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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

# Participation of the United Nations in the review of the governance arrangements of the World Food Programme

## Report of the Secretary-General

## INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 45/218 of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly recognized the need for improved governance arrangements for the World Food Programme (WFP) consistent with its programme requirements, its accountability to member States and its characteristics as an entity of the United Nations system, urged the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes to complete expeditiously its review of governance arrangements and requested the Secretary-General to continue to participate fully in the review of governance arrangements of WFP and to report to it at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the participation of the United Nations in the review of those governance arrangements. In pursuance of that request, the Secretary-General submits herewith a report on the participation of the United Nations in the review.

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* A/46/50.

** E/1991/100.

## II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF FOOD AID POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

2. At its twenty-ninth session (4-7 June 1990), the Committee of Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA) decided to undertake a review of the governance of WFP and the relationship between the United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP, and to establish a subcommittee to study and make recommendations regarding the proposals put forward by the member States, the Executive Director of WFP, the Director-General of FAO and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. Recognizing the need for improved governance arrangements for WFP consistent with its programme requirements, its accountability to member States and its characteristics as an entity of the United Nations system, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1990/79 of 27 July 1990, welcomed the decision of CFA to establish a subcommittee to review the governance of WFP and the relationship between the United Nations, FAO and WFP.

4. In order to facilitate participation of the United Nations in the work of CFA and its subcommittee in that review, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Peter Hansen, Executive Director, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, to coordinate the preparation and participation of the United Nations.

5. In a letter dated 2 August 1990 to the Director-General of FAO, the Secretary-General expressed his conviction that a positive response to the concerns expressed by Member States would facilitate a solution to the various existing difficulties, and he assured the Director-General of the full cooperation of the United Nations in providing such a positive response.

6. In preparation for the task, the United Nations carried out, inter alia, a review of the administrative and financial aspects of existing and proposed modalities of the relationship between WFP, FAO and the United Nations, taking into account various arrangements between the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies and organizations that enjoy a different degree of autonomy, particularly programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the United Nations Population Fund.

7. At the opening of the first session of Subcommittee on the Governance of the World Food Programme (3-11 September 1990), the Secretary-General, in his message, stated that WFP, since its inception in 1961 as an experimental programme of approximately $100 million, had become an established and major actor in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, with a current target for contributions of $1.5 billion and that the development of WFP operations justified a careful review of the basic arrangements governing its management.

8. The Secretary-General was of the view that, as a general policy, it was important to maintain the principle of a close relationship between WFP and FAO and the United Nations and to maintain WFP as equally balanced between the two parent organizations. The arrangement envisaged was one of close

cooperation. It was stressed that within that general institutional framework a wide range of organizational arrangements was possible with regard to intergovernmental supervision and direction (CFA) and the secretariat, and that it was up to delegations to recommend those arrangements which would best meet the needs of WFP. The central concern was that WFP should have the capacity to carry out its mission in an effective manner. As WFP was not solely a subsidiary organ of either the United Nations or FAO, but a joint organ, the Executive Director of WFP should have the necessary authority to administer it under his responsibility and under the guidance of CFA.

9. The first session of the Subcommittee focused its deliberations on issues related to (a) the role of CFA, (b) the role of the Executive Director of WFP, (c) the relationship of WFP with the United Nations and FAO, and (d) general principles of food aid policies. Further discussion took place at the second session of the Subcommittee (8-12 October 1990) on issues related to (a) the size and composition of CFA, (b) authority over the Trust Fund and (c) emergency operations, in addition to the issues discussed at the first session.

10. In the course of the discussion in the Subcommittee, the Representative of the Secretary-General was called upon to comment on various proposals and issues raised by delegations.

11. Although no agreement was reached at the first and second sessions of the Subcommittee on specific recommendations to CFA, there was a wide range of convergence of views in many areas, including:

(a) The strengthening of CFA to provide intergovernmental supervision and direction of WFP, including the enlargement of its membership;

(b) The provision of greater authority to the Executive Director of WFP to administer the Programme, including personnel, administrative and budgetary matters;

(c) The need for the United Nations and FAO to remain parent bodies of WFP in a relationship based on close cooperation.

12. CFA, at its thirtieth session, considered the report of the Subcommittee on the work of its first and second sessions. In order to finalize its own proposals on this question, CFA established a sessional working group to present recommendations. On the basis of the proposals of the working group, CFA adopted by consensus a package of recommendations relating to the governance of WFP. CFA also decided that the working group should meet for one week from 28 January 1991 to translate the agreed recommendations into specific revisions of the General Regulations for WFP.

13. CFA requested the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with FAO and WFP, starting texts for consideration by the working group.

14. In pursuance to that request, the Office of Legal Affairs prepared and submitted to the working group a proposed revised text of the General Regulations, after consultation with FAO and WFP.

15. The working group of CFA met from 28 January to 1 February 1991. It expressed its appreciation for the comprehensiveness and timeliness of the starting text of the revised General Regulations as prepared by the Office of Legal Affairs, and considered carefully the comments and clarifications of the legal experts and representatives from the United Nations, FAO and WFP.

16. After examining the proposals contained in the starting text in light of the terms of reference established by CFA, the working group recommended by consensus draft revised General Regulations for consideration by CFA at its special session to be held in March 1991. The working group also recommended for consideration of CFA draft resolutions forwarding the draft revised General Regulations to the Economic and Social Council and the Council of FAO and from the Economic and Social Council and the Council of FAO to the General Assembly and the FAO Conference.

17. The working group further recommended that at its special session the Committee should instruct the Executive Director of WFP to prepare draft financial regulations for approval as soon as possible by CFA after receiving advice from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the FAO Finance Committee.

18. The special session of CFA took place on 18 and 19 March 1991 (see E/1991/69). At that session the Committee adopted by consensus and as a whole the report of the working group and its recommendations.

19. The Secretary-General stated in a message that the United Nations welcomed the consensus reached by the member States on the governance of WFP. It also welcomed the decision made to maintain WFP as a joint programme of the United Nations and FAO, thereby reaffirming the important linkage of food aid to development, on the one hand, and to food production and nutrition, on the other. The Secretary-General in his message also expressed his confidence that with the proposed changes, WFP would be able to improve further on its impressive performance, while continuing to draw upon the technical services of FAO and the United Nations, as well as other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system. It was hoped that the changes would bring about closer cooperation between WFP and its parent organizations. Such cooperation was not only desirable but essential, given the complexity of development problems and the increasingly protracted nature of emergency assistance. The United Nations expressed its readiness to review how it could provide better support to WFP to ensure the development underpinnings of its activities.

20. The Secretary-General further stated that the United Nations welcomed in particular the recommendation to include in the revised regulations a provision for the Secretary-General to draw on WFP in providing humanitarian relief assistance. That would enable the United Nations to provide such assistance in a timely manner. To that end, the United Nations expressed its

willingness to continue to coordinate its activities fully with those of concerned organizations of the United Nations system and with the efforts of non-governmental organizations.

21. In conclusion, the Secretary-General expressed the hope that with the envisaged changes, the Programme would enjoy even greater support from the international community, and he called upon all Governments in considering their support and contributions to the Programme to take fully into account the increasing needs for food aid as development assistance as well as for emergency purposes. He stated that WFP had proven to be an effective multilateral instrument for emergency and development assistance and that with better governance it deserved greater support for its future activities.

## III. DELIBERATIONS OF THE FAO COUNCIL

22. The FAO Council, at its ninety-ninth session held in Rome from 10 to 21 June 1991, reviewed the recommendations of CFA on the governance of WFP and the relationship between the United Nations, FAO and WFP. Members of the FAO Council welcomed the recommendations reached by consensus at CFA and decided to transmit to the FAO Conference for its adoption the draft recommendations of CFA on this question.

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